

Section V

Communicating Results with Parents and Guardians

**Suggested Activities
for Communicating with
Parents and Guardians
about the CELDT**

Sample Parent Brochure

**Guide for Parents and
Guardians of Children
with Disabilities**

**Sample Letters for
Principals to Send with
Student Reports to
Parents**

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Suggested Activities for Communicating with Parents and Guardians about the CELDT

This section is designed to assist schools and school districts in their efforts to respond to the questions and concerns of parents and guardians of students who took the CELDT in the 2005–06 school year. One question of parents and guardians often relates to the opportunity to opt out of the CELDT administration. State and federal laws require that all students whose primary language is other than English should be assessed for English language proficiency, and parents and guardians cannot remove (opt out) their children from this requirement. The legal basis for requiring English proficiency testing is that all students have the right to an equal and appropriate education and any English language limitations (left unidentified and/or unaddressed) could preclude a student from accessing that right.

Assistance materials include a sample brochure for parents and guardians, sample letters to principals, a sample CELDT Student Proficiency Level Report, and a brief explanation about the report.

The *Test Results Interpretation Guide*, designed to provide general information to parents/guardians about the CELDT, is available in English and ten other languages on the CTB McGraw-Hill Web site. The CDE Web site provides a link to this site. The guide includes:

- A description of the test format.
- An explanation of the test scores and how the results are reported.
- An explanation of what the results mean.
- Definitions of the English language proficiency levels.

The information provided in this section should be shared with school district and school representatives, advisory committees, and support groups who work with parents/guardians, students, and community leaders.

Communicating With Parents and Guardians

Schools and/or school districts need to provide a variety of opportunities for sharing information with parents and guardians. Some suggested activities include:

- Schedule presentations about the CELDT results and the school's instructional program at planned information sessions for the parents and guardians of students who took the test (i.e., Parent Teacher Association [PTA], school site councils [SSC], and school district and school English learner advisory committees [DELAC, ELAC]).
- Prepare a brief article about the CELDT for school/home newsletters.
- Work with parent leaders to offer neighborhood coffees to provide information and answer questions and concerns of parents and guardians.
- Have teachers, coordinators, and/or other designated staff provide information about the CELDT in their information materials and at meetings and presentations.
- Work with other agencies that assist families, whose primary language is other than English, to provide information about the CELDT, its purpose, and use of the results.

Immediate Assistance for Parents and Guardians

The process for reporting individual student results calls for the need to provide parents and guardians with immediate assistance, including:

- Have designated school district/school staff members and/or parent leaders on hand at school sites or appropriate locations for two to three days after student proficiency level reports from the annual CELDT administration are distributed to answer questions and concerns of parents and guardians. Notify parents and guardians of the time and location for this assistance in the cover letter that goes with the report.
- Set up a CELDT information hotline that parents or guardians can call to ask questions about their students' initial or annual results. Advertise the hotline in newspapers of all major languages and through other available media.

- Provide translations of student results and other CELDT information in the primary languages of parents and guardians when possible (e.g., the Interpretation Guide). When translations are not possible, notify parents and guardians when, where, and how language assistance is available.

Student Communication

An important purpose of the CELDT is to provide information to parents and guardians about their students' level of English language proficiency. Students also need timely feedback about their results. Often, parents and guardians will ask students to help explain their results and how the results will be used. Suggested activities may include:

- Encourage parents and guardians to discuss the CELDT results with their students.
- Provide opportunities at school for students who took the CELDT to ask questions about their CELDT results and the instructional program(s) to which they are assigned.
- Make sure student leaders are informed about how and when CELDT results are to be reported to students and the public, what the results mean, and how they are to be used.
- Prepare a brief article about the CELDT for student newspapers.

Employee Information about the CELDT

School district and school employees are key to the success of any communications effort. Parents and guardians and community members turn to school employees for answers to their questions or concerns about education. Suggested activities to prepare employees for their role as key communicators may include:

- Provide information about the *CELD*T in staff meetings to prepare employees (classified and certificated) to answer general questions about the exam and to explain when, where, and how parents and guardians can receive information and assistance.

- Give employees the written information that parents and guardians receive (e.g., fact sheet, sample student proficiency level report, and explanation sheet about the results).
- Tell employees when and what CELDT results will be placed on the Internet to prepare them for questions they may receive from parents and guardians and other community members.

How are the CELDT results reported for individual students?

There are five levels of English proficiency a student can achieve. They are beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, and advanced.

The report for each student provides:

- ▶ A proficiency level for each part of the test with student scores
- ▶ The student's overall English proficiency level for all parts of the test combined and an overall student score

How are results of the CELDT used?

Test results for newly enrolled students are used to help identify English learners who need to develop their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in English. Results from the CELDT, which is given annually, are used to see how well students are learning English. Annual results also are used to help decide when students are fluent English proficient (FEP).

How can parents and guardians find out more about the CELDT or their students' results?

If parents and guardians wish information about the CELDT or their student's results on the CELDT, they should contact their student's teacher and/or school office. Parents and guardians are invited to request a conference to review the CELDT results or to attend one of the information meetings scheduled by the school.

For more information...

Information about the CELDT is on the California Department of Education Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/el>.

CALIFORNIA ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT TEST

Information for Parents and Guardians

**Prepared by
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What is the California English Language Development Test?

Federal and state laws require a state test that school districts must give to students whose home language is not English. This test is called the California English Language Development test (CELDT).

What is the purpose of the CELDT?

The purpose of this test is:

- ▶ To identify new students who are English learners, in kindergarten through grade twelve.
- ▶ To determine their level of English proficiency.
- ▶ To monitor their progress in learning English.

Who is an English learner?

An English learner is a student, with a home language other than English, who is not yet proficient in English.

Who must take the CELDT?

All students whose primary language is not English must take the test within 30 calendar days after they are enrolled in a California public school for the first time. The CELDT also must be given once each year to English learners until they become proficient in English.

What does the CELDT cover?

The CELDT covers listening and speaking skills for students in kindergarten and grade one. The test for students in grades two through twelve covers listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The CELDT at all grade levels is based on English language development standards, adopted by the State Board of Education.

Who gives the CELDT?

Only trained examiners give the test. The listening and speaking parts of the CELDT are given individually to each student. The reading and writing parts are given to groups of students.

How long does it take for students to complete the CELDT?

The speaking part of the test takes about 10 to 15 minutes for each student to complete. The listening, reading, and writing parts take about 2 hours to complete.

How and when do parents and guardians get their Students' test results?

As soon as the tests are scored by the testing contractor, the results are returned to the school district. The school district prepares a report of the results for each student and sends it to the parents or guardians.

Are all accommodations or modifications that are used during instruction allowed for testing?

Accommodations or modifications used in testing should not give students with disabilities an unfair advantage. For example, it may not be appropriate to read a reading test or to have a scribe write the writing test for a student.

Who decides whether accommodations/modifications are used, and if so, which ones?

The individualized education program (IEP) team, made up of parents and guardians, the classroom teacher, the program or school administrator, and specialists, decides whether a student should use accommodations, modifications, and/or alternate assessments. That decision is to be based on the student's needs.

For more information about test accommodations/modifications...

For more information, contact your student's teacher, counselor, or principal. California's guidelines for accommodations are on the California Department of Education Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/documents/matrix5.pdf>.

CALIFORNIA ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT TEST

Guide for Parents and Guardians of Students with Disabilities

Prepared by
California Department of Education

February 2006

What is the California English Language Development Test?

Federal and state laws require the development of a state test that school districts must give to students whose home language is not English. This test is called the California English Language Development Test (CELDT).

Why is the CELDT given?

The state requires CELDT testing in public schools throughout California. The CELDT program requires that all new students with a primary language other than English and all English learners take the CELDT. This test has several uses:

- ▶ To identify students who are English learners.
- ▶ To determine the level of English language proficiency of English learners.
- ▶ To assess the progress of English learners in acquiring the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English.

Hasn't my student been tested enough already?

Some testing is done to see whether your student requires special instructions. Ongoing testing is used to ensure that your student's educational needs are being met.

How can more testing help my student?

Teachers use tests to plan instruction for your student. Without test results, teachers have less information to help make decisions.

Doesn't testing take time away from instruction?

The time used for testing can result in better teaching. Test results help teachers decide whether students are learning what they need to succeed. With test results, teachers can provide instruction that addresses identified needs.

Why should my student take part in the test?

If your student does not take the test, teachers will not receive scores for your student. Without test results, teachers are less able to make good decisions about the instruction that your student needs.

My student has a disability. Won't my student be at a disadvantage?

Students with disabilities should be included in CELDT testing. Many students with disabilities can take tests under the same conditions as their classmates who are not disabled.

Some students with disabilities should take tests with accommodations or modifications. The purpose of accommodations or modifications is to help students with disabilities show what they know and can do.

A small number of students with severe disabilities will not be able to take the CELDT, even with accommodations or modifications. Alternate testing is needed to include these students in the program.

Sample Parent/Guardian Notification Form for Initial Identification of English Learners (for students identified as English Learners)

Dear Parents/Guardians:

State and federal laws require all school districts in California to give a state test to students whose primary language is not English. The name of this test is the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Its purpose is to determine how well each student tested can speak, listen, read, and write in English.

Your student has been given the CELDT, and the results have identified him/her as an English learner. Your student will be assigned to an appropriate instructional program based on the results. The goal of this program is to help students like your student develop proficiency in English and succeed in the school's academic curriculum.

[The school district may want to add a sentence to describe the instructional program to which the student will be assigned.]

You are invited to request a conference at school where your student's program will be explained. To schedule your student conference, call _____.

You are welcome to observe in the classroom and to participate on the school's English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC). If you have any questions regarding your student's instructional placement, please contact the school office.

Sincerely,

Superintendent/Principal

Date

Sample Parent/Guardian Notification Form for Initial Identification of English Learners (for students identified as fluent English proficient)

Dear Parents/Guardians:

State and federal laws require all school districts in California to give a state test to students whose primary language is not English. The name of this test is the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Its purpose is to determine how well each student tested can speak, listen, read, and write in English.

Your student has been given the CELDT, and the results have identified him/ her as fluent English proficient (FEP). This means that your student will be assigned to a regular academic program and will not need special help to increase his/her English skills. **[The school district may want to add a sentence to describe how the school will monitor the student's academic progress for the next two years.]**

You are encouraged to become involved in your student's education. If you have any questions regarding your student's instructional placement, please contact the school office.

Sincerely,

Superintendent/Principal

Date

Sample Parent/Guardian Notification Letter for Annual Assessment Results

(for English learners who have not yet reached proficiency in English)

Dear Parents/Guardians:

State and federal laws require all school districts in California to give a state test each year to every student whose primary language is not English and who is currently identified as an English learner. The name of this test is the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Its purpose is to see how well each student is learning to listen, speak, read, and write in English.

Your student has been given the *CELDT*, and the results are attached. Based on the proficiency level your student achieved on this test, he/she will continue to receive special assistance to become more proficient in English and to succeed in the school's academic program. **[The school district may want to add a sentence to describe the instructional program to which the student is or will be assigned.]**

You are invited to request a conference at school where your student's CELDT results and instructional program will be explained. To schedule your conference, call _____.

You are welcome to observe in the classroom and also to participate in the school's English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC). If you have any questions regarding the CELDT or your student's instructional placement, please contact the school office.
Sincerely,

Superintendent/Principal

Date

Sample Parent/Guardian Notification Letter for Annual Assessment Results (for English learners being considered for reclassification)

Dear Parents/Guardians:

State and federal laws require all school districts in California to give a state test each year to every student whose home language is not English and who is currently identified as an English learner. The name of this test is the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Its purpose is to see how well each student is learning to listen, speak, read, and write in English.

Your student has been given the CELDT, and the results are attached. Based on the proficiency level your student achieved on this test, he/she may be reclassified to fluent English proficient. In addition to the CELDT results, criteria used to make this decision include an evaluation of your student's academic performance by the teacher, your opinion as the parent/guardian about his/her proficiency in English, and your student's performance on the California English-Language Arts Standards Test (given as part of the Standardized Testing and Reporting [STAR] Program).

You are invited to attend a special meeting at school to discuss the reclassification process and the recommended program for your student on _____ at _____ in _____. Please contact the school office at _____ to tell us whether or not you are able to attend.

We urge you to attend this important meeting and continue to be actively involved in your student's learning.

Sincerely,

Superintendent/Principal

Date